

Great Brit. Parliament (1642)

A
DECLARATION
OF THE
LORDS AND COMMONS
ASSEMBLED IN
PARLIAMENT.

Setting forth the Grounds and Reasons,
That necessitate them at this time to take up defensive
Arms for the Preservation of his Majesties Person,
The maintenance of the true Religion, The Lawes and
Liberties of this Kingdome, And the Power
and Priviledge of PARLIAMENT.

Ordered by the Commons in Parliament, that this
Declaration be forthwith printed and published.

Hen. Elsing, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

August 3.

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1642.

A Declaration of the Lords and Commons now Assembled in PARLIAMENT.

WE the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, Having taken into serious consideration, the present State and Condition of imminent danger, in which the Kingdom now stands, by reason of a malignant Party, prevailing with His Majesty; putting him upon violent and perillous wayes, and now in Arms against us, to the hazarding of His Majesties Person; and for the oppression of the true Religion, The Lawes and Liberties of this Kingdom, and the power and privilege of Parliament: All which, every honest man is bound to defend; especially those who have taken the late protestation, by which they are more particularly tied unto it, and the more answerable before God, should they neglect it: Wherefore, we finding our selves engaged in a necessity, to take up Arms likewise, for the defence of these, which otherwise must suffer and perish; And having used all good wayes and means to prevent extremities, and preserve the peace of the Kingdom (which good intentions of ours, the malignity of our enemies hath rendered altogether successlesse and vaine;) Do now think fit to give this accompt unto the World, to be a satisfaction unto all men, of the justice of our proceedings, and a warning unto those who are involved in the same danger with us, to let them see the necessity, and duty which lyes upon them, to save themselves, their Religion, and Country; For which purpose, we set out this ensuing declaration.

THat it appeares by the Answer which His Majesty hath given to the humble petition for peace, presented unto Him by both Houses of Parliament, and those demands which He makes, That the designe which hath beene so long carried on to alter the frame and constitution of this Government, both in Church and State, is now come to ripeness, and the Contrivers of it, conceive themselves arrived to that Condition of strength, That they shall be able to put it in present execution.

For, What else can be signified by the demanding of Hull, the Fleet, and the Magazine to be immediately delivered up, All our preparations of force to cease, And the defensive Arms of the Parliament to be laid down, And the Parliament to be adjourned to another place, then, That we should out of the sense of our own inability to make resistance, yeild our selves to the cruell mercy of those who have possessed the King against us, and incited him to violate all the privileges, and revile the Persons and proceedings of the Parliament? or else, if (as it cannot be otherwise conceived) we doe not grant what is so unreasonable and de-

destructive, forthwith to bring on that force which is prepared against us, by the concurrence and assistance of Papists, an ambitious and discontented Clergy, Delinquents obnoxious to the justice of Parliament; and some ill affected persons of the Nobility and Gentry; who out of their desire of a dissolute liberty, apprehend, and would keepe off the reformation intended by the Parliament.

These Persons have conspired together to ruine this Parliament, which alone hath set a stop to that violence so long intended; and often attempted for the Alteration of Religion, and subversion of the Laws and Liberties of the Kingdom.

How farre we were plunged in a miserable expectation of most evill dayes, and how fast this growing mischief prevailed upon us before the parliament, needs not now be declared, It being so fresh and bleeding in every mans memory; religion was made but forme, and outside; and those who made conscience to maintaine the substance and purity of it, Whether Clergy, or others, were discountenanced and oppressed, as the great enemies of the State. The Lawes were no defence, nor protection of any mans right, All was subject to will, and power, which imposed what payments they thought fit, to drain the Subjects purse, and supply those necessities, which their ill Counsells had brought upon the King, or gratifie such as were instruments in promoting those illegall, and oppressive courses. They who yeilded and complied, were countenanced and advanced, all others disgraced and kept under: that so mens minds made poore, and base, and their Liberties lost and gone, they might be ready to let go their religion, whensoever it should be resolved to alter it: which was, and still is the great designe, and all else made use of, but as instrumentary and subservient to it.

When they conceived the way to be sufficiently prepared, They at last resolved to put on their masterpiece in *Scotland*, (where the same method had beene followed) and more boldly to unmaske themselves, in imposing upon them a popish service Booke, for well they knew the same Fate attended both Kingdoms, and religion could not be altered in the one, without the other. God raised the Spirits of that Nation to oppose it, with so much zeale and indignation, that it kindled such a flame, as no expedient could bee found, but a Parliament here to quench it.

This necessity brought on this Parliament, and the same necessity gave it in the beginning power, to act with more vigour and resolution, then former Parliaments had don, And to set upon a Reformation of the great disorders, both in the Ecclesiasticall, and Civill state, which drew a more particular envy, and odium upon it, then was usuall to the generallity of Parliaments; and was a cause, that those, who had swallowed up in their thoughts, our Religion and Liberties, and now saw themselves defeated by this means, bended all their indeavours, and raised all their forces to destroy it.

First, Whilst the Scottish Army remained here, they indeavoured to incense

two Nations, and engage their Armies one against the other, that in such a confusion as needs must have followed, the Parliament might not be able to fit, and those forces destroy one another, might open some opportunity for them to gaine their ends upon both Kingdomes; and that then as their need, so the being of the Parliament might cease: The wisdom of the Parliament prevented that mischief, and composed those great differences betwixt the King and the Kingdome of *Scotland*: that plot failing, They endeavoured to turne the English Army against the Parliament: This was discovered, the chiefe Actors fled, and the danger avoided. Then they labour to stir up the Scottish Army against us, But such was the faithfulness and affection of those our Brethren, that they could not effect it.

After this they carry the King into *Scotland*, to try if a party could be there raised, to suppress first, the good party in that Kingdome, and so compass their intended purpose here. At the same time, The Rebellion in *Ireland*, an egge likewise of their hatching, breakes out, but their plot failed in *Scotland*; yet upon hopes of successe there, Such preparatives were here, and such recourse of ill affected persons to this towne, that the Parliament thought it necessary for their owne security, to have a guard. The King upon His returne instantly dismisses that guard, and puts another upon us, which produced such ill effects, as wee were glad to dismiss them and rather run any hazard then have such a guard.

Thus left naked, presently some members of both Houses are unjustly charged with Treason; and the King comes with a Troop of Cavalieres to the House of Commons, to fetch those away by force, who he had caused to be so unjustly accused; The greatest violation of the priviledges of Parliament that ever was attempted, and so manifest a destruction of the right of the Subject, which is onely preserved by Parliament, That the City of *London* tooke a pious and generous resolution, to guard the Parliament themselves; which so grieved and enraged those wicked persons, who had engaged the King in that last, and all those other designs and practises against the Parliament, That they make Him forsake *White-Hall*, under pretence that His person was there in danger, a suggestion as false as the father of lies can invent.

Then do they work upon him, and upon the Queene, perswade her to retire out of the Kingdom, and carry him further and further from the Parliament, and so possess him with an hatred of it, that they cannot put words bitter enough into his mouth, to expresse it upon all occasions; they make him crosse, oppose, and inveigh against all the proceedings of Parliament; encourage and protect all those who will affront it, take away all power and authority from it, to make it contemptible and of lesse esteem then the meanest Court, draw away the Members, commanding them to come to Him to *York*, and instead of discharging their duty in the service of the Parliament, to contribute their advice and assistance to the destruction of it, endeavour to possess the people, that the Parliament will take away

away the Law, and introduce an Arbitrary government; a thing which every honest morall man abhors, much more the Wisdom, Justice, and Piety of the two Houses of Parliament; and in truth such a charge, as no rationall man can beleeve it, it being unpossible so many severall persons, as the two Houses of Parliament consist of, about 600. and in either House all of equall power, should all of them, or at least the *maior* part, agree in Acts of Will and Tyranny, which make up an Arbitrary government; and most improbable, that the Nobility, and chief Gentry of this Kingdom, should conspire to take away the Law, by which they enjoy their estates, are protected from any act of violence, and power, and distinguished from the meaner sort of people, with whom otherwise they would be but fellow-servants.

To make all this good upon the Parliament; and either make the Kingdome beleeve it, or so aw it, as no body shall dare say the contrary; force is prepared, men are levied, and the Malignant party of the Kingdom, as was before specified, that is, Papists, the Prelaticall Clergy, Delinquents, and that part of the Nobility and Gentry, which either feare reformation, or seeke preferment by betraying their Countrey, to serve the Court, have combined to bury the happinesse of this Kingdom, in the ruine of this Parliament, and by forcing it, to cut up the freedom of Parliament by the root, and either take all Parliaments away, or which is worse, make them the instruments of slavery, to confirm it by Law, and leave the disease incurable.

That done, then come they to crown their worke, and put that in execution, which was first in their intention, that is the changing of religion into popery and superstition.

All this while the two Houses of Parliament have with all duty and loyalty still applied themselves unto His Majesty, and laboured by humble prayers, and cleere and convincing reasons and arguments in severall Petitions, to satisfie him of their intentions, the justnesse of their proceedings, their desire of the safety of His royall person, and of the peace of the Kingdom.

And only to preserve that peace, and prevent the pernicious practices of these Incendiaries, (such as the Lord *Digby*, who at first perswaded the King to get into some strong place, that he might protect those whom he stiled the Kings servants, but in truth such as do divide Him from His Parliament and Kingdom, and might be revenged upon his Parliament, where he said Traytors bare that sway, who in the mean time promised he would doe him service abroad, which by His own Letters appears to be the procuring of supplies against the Kingdom and Parliament, with which he himselfe said he would return, as since he hath done disguised, with store of Arms, in the Ship called *The Providence*; And who had attempted upon the Kings first going from *White Hall*, to raise some numbers of horse and foot under the colour of a Guard for His Majesty, to be the foundation of an Army against the Parliament, which then failing, hath since taken effect, and

there

ews what was then in their thoughts, before *Hull*, or the *Militia*, or any thing
se of that nature was in Question) the Parliament thought fit to secure *Hull*,
ast it might be a receptacle of such ill-affected persons, and of what aid could be
otten from forraigne parts, the Fleet under the Earle of *Warwick* to defend the
Kingdom, and prevent such mischief from abroad; the Magazin of Arms, that
ney should not be imployed against Us, and the *Militia* of the Kingdome in such
lands as the parliament might confide in, to suppress cōmotions within our selves.
And how necessary all this was to be done, the succeeding designs and pra^{cti}-
is upon them, all do sufficiently manifest, and great cause hath the whole King-
ome to blesse God, who put it into the heads and hearts of the Parliament to
ake care of these particulars. For were these pernicious persons about the King
asters of them, how easie would it be for them to master the Parliament, and
master the Kingdom? And what could we expect but ruin and destruction from
uch masters, who make the King in this manner revile, and detest us and our
ctions? such, who have imbarqued Him in so many designs to overthrow this
Parliament? such, who have long thirsted to see Religion and Liberty confounded
together?

Let the world now judge, what more could be done by us then we have done
o appease His Majesty, and regain His grace and favour, if (after the presenting
f such a petition as the last was, so full of submis^sion, humble, affectionate desires
f peace, so full of duty and loyalty, as we thought malice it self could not have
accepted against it? And having received so sharp a return, such expressions of
itternesse, a justification and avowed protection of Delinquents from the hand
f justice, Demands of so apparent danger, such manifestations of an intention to
estroy us, and with us the whole Kingdom, and this most clearly evidenced by
their subsequent actions; even since these propositions have been made unto us
om His Majesty, overrunning severall Counties, compelling the Trained bands
y force to come in and joyne with them, or disarming them, and putting their
Arms into the hands of leud and desperate persons, thereby turning the Arms of
he Kingdome against it selfe) it be not fit for us, not onely not to yeeld to what is
equired, but also to make further provision, for the preservation of our selves, and
f those who have sent us hither, and intrusted us with all they have, Estates, Li-
erty, and Life, and that which is the life of their lives, their religion, and even for
he safety of the Kings person now environed by those, who carry Him upon
His owne ruine, and the destruction of all His people: at least to give them war-
ing, that all this is in danger; That if the King may force this Parliament, they
ay bid farewell to all Parliaments, from ever receiving good by them; and if
Parliaments be lost, they are lost; Their Laws are lost, as wel those lately made,
s in former times, all which will be cut in sunder, with the same sword now drawn
or the destruction of this Parliament.

Then if they wil not come to help the Parliament, and save themselves, though
both

both they and we must perish; yet have we offered up our
vered our soules, and we wil looke for a reward in Heaven, should we be so ill re-
quited upon Earth, by those of whom we have so wel deserved; which we cannot
teare, having found upon all occasions such real Demonstrations of their love and
affection, & of their right understanding and apprehension of our and their com-
mon danger, especially now, that the Question is so clearly stated, and that it ap-
peareth that neither *Hull*, nor the *Militia*, nor the *Magazin*, are the grounds of
the warre which is so furiously driven on against us by a malignant party of Pa-
pists, those who call themselves Cavaliers, and other ill-affected persons; but
far forth onely as the Parliament and all the Members of both Houses, and all
other persons who have shewed themselves forward for the defence of the sincer-
ity of Religion, the Laws and Liberties of the Kingdome, and the just power and
priviledges of Parliament are preserved and secured thereby.

For the many designs upon the parliament above mentioned, the attempt
to be possessed of *Hull*, and of the *Magazine*, by sending thither *Captaine* *Legg*,
Delinquent to the parliament, for having had a hand in the treasonable practice
to bring up the Army against us, and the *Earl of Newcastle* in a disguised habit
which was a pursuance of the Lord *Digbys* advice, and the endeavouring to raise
forces under pretence of a Guard to the Kings person in the winter.

All this before we medled with *Hull*, or *Magazine*, or *Militia*, shew plainely
that our act in securing them, was not the cause of the Kings taking up arms
and exercising hostility upon his loving and loyall subjects, which was in the
thoughts and endeavours of those about the King, who then had, and still have
the greatest influence upon his counsellors, before we thought of *Hull*, or *Militia*
or any thing else of that nature; and then that our resigning of them now, would
not prevail with him to make him lay downe his armes, and returne to his Parli-
ament, and gratifie the earnest and longing desires of his people, to enjoy his pre-
sence, favour, and protection: But that if he could recover either by our resigna-
tion, or any other way, pieces of so much advantage to him, and weakning to us,
use would be made of them to our infinite prejudice and ruine, the intention be-
ing still the same, not to rest satisfied with having *Hull*, or taking away the ordi-
nance of the *Militia*; But to destroy the Parliament, and be masters of our religi-
on and liberties, to make us slaves, and alter the Government of this Kingdome
and reduce it to the condition of some other countries, which are not governe
by Parliaments, and so by Lawes, but by the will of the Prince, or rather of those
who are about him.

Yet willingly would we give his Majesty satisfaction in these particulars (and
so have we offered it) could we be secured, that disarming our selves, and deliv-
ring them up to his Majesty, (as the sword of Justice is already put into the hand
of divers Popish, and other ill-affected persons, by putting them into the Com-
missions of the Peace, and other Commissions, and putting out others that are
wel

the hands of those evill counsellors, and ill-affectcd persons; who are so pre-
sented with his Majestie, papists many of them, or very late Converts, by taking
the Oaths of Supremacie and Allegiance, for which, they may very well have a
dispensation, or indulgence, to be enabled thereby to promote so great a service
to the popish cause, as to destroy the two Houses of Parliament, and through
their sides, the Protestant Religion.

But we have too just cause to beleieve and know, considering those continued
designes upon us, and the composition of the Kings army, and of his Counsell at
his time, that these things are desired, to be made use of to our destruction, and
the destruction of that which we are bound by our protestation to defend, and
woe to us if we doe it not, at least doe our utmost endeavours in it, for the dis-
charge of Our Duties, and the saving of our soules, and leave the successe to God
Allmighty.

Therefore we the Lords and Commons are resolved to expose our lives and
fortunes for the defence and maintenance of the true Religion, the Kings Person,
Honour and Estate, the power and priviledge of Parliament, and the just rights
and liberties of the Subject.

And for the prevention of that mischievous designe, which gives motion to all
the rest, and hath been so strongly pursued these many yeeres, the altering of our
religion, which if God in his mercy had not miraculously diverted, long agoe
and we been brought to the condition of poor *Ireland*, weltring in our own blood
and confusion.

And we do here require all those who have any sence of piety, honour, or com-
passion, to help a distressed state, especially such as have taken the protestation, and
are bound in the same duty with us unto their God, their King and Countrey, to
come in to our ayd and assistance: This being the true cause for which we raise an
Army, under the Command of the Earl of *Essex*, with whom in this Quarrell we
will live and die.

F I N I S.

